



Top Literacy and Numeracy Tips for Parents

High School

Literacy

- Stay involved! You can continue to support your child's learning at school by being interested and finding out what they are studying or what assignments they have. Some schools also have an assessment calendar that can be sent to parents/carers so you can know what is coming up for your teenager.
- Even if you don't know a lot about what your child is learning in high school, try to continue helping them with homework. Look through the reading materials together, ask your child to show you their plan for getting an assignment done, their ideas and the timing involved, and ask what references the teacher expects. Just being there, expressing an interest and saying you want to help can make your child feel supported – even if you can't help with the subject matter itself.
- Try to continue to read to, and with your child, and introduce more challenging books, articles or journals – you can try looking through the newspaper together or researching information on a topic of interest online.
- Talk about the things you read and watch together, e.g.:
 - *"This article claims that ... what do you think?"*
 - *"That movie was interesting – what do you think it was about?"*
- Let your child see you reading, researching, writing and viewing different materials: newspapers, emails, cookbooks, labels, instructions, signs, films, documentaries, websites, etc.
- Have a wide range of reading materials available to your teenager at home. Encourage your child to read widely (newspapers, magazines, websites, brochures, etc.), particularly on topics that interest them – let them experience the joy of reading for pleasure.
- Don't be concerned or comment if your child reads and re-reads the same books even when older – all reading is good. If your teenager is not interested in novels, you can suggest other types of materials including comics and non-fiction.
- Help your child to use print and electronic reference materials (dictionary, thesaurus and encyclopaedia). Discuss how to use an index, a contents page and how a thesaurus can help when you need just the right word.
- Encourage your child to rehearse oral presentations and performances in front of family members and ask for feedback.
- Be creative if your child is reluctant to get involved. You may like to keep a shopping list on the fridge and ask your child to add to it, or ask your child to read something you need to know about to you while you are busy preparing dinner, examples include the recipe, instructions, a newspaper article, school bulletin or the TV guide. Some parents find asking

their child to read to younger siblings or help them with their homework is an effective method to engage their child and build confidence.

- Help your child to see a real-life purpose for what they are learning at school. Children often think reading and writing applies only to school work – help them to understand that reading and writing is important to everything going on around them – from text messages and emails to finding out where to go for a concert, booking tickets, preparing a resume, writing a shopping list, helping to organise a holiday etc.
- If you struggle with reading or writing, or have a language background other than English, use the support that is offered through the school, local library and community centres, or contact the Reading Writing Hotline: www.readingwritinghotline.edu.au
- If your child is having problems with literacy, talk to your child's teacher or the school principal. Let the school know you are concerned and committed to helping your child improve their reading and writing skills – they are there to help.

Adapted from:

- <http://www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/kit06/middlesec.pdf>
- <http://www.nlnw.nsw.edu.au/pdfs/yr7broch.pdf>
- <http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/en/homework-and-study/english/english-tips/reading/helping-teens-with-reading>

Numeracy

- Talk positively about mathematics with your child – even if you struggled with it at school yourself. Staying positive about maths will help your child. Saying "*I was bad at maths*" can lower a child's own expectations of themselves at maths and can give your child an excuse not to try.
- Talk to your child about how you use maths in everyday life – and help them to see the real-life purpose for the maths they learn at school. Try talking about:
 - the cost and value of various mobile phone plans to find the most economical option based on call costs, calling patterns, your teenager's phone usage and analysing previous bills
 - household bills, such as electricity and water – analyse graphs and discuss costs and ways to reduce energy or water consumption or just how to make a simple budget. There are great templates for these online.
 - numerical information, statistics and data in newspapers and online (this could be sporting statistics, or weather information such as on www.bom.gov.au)
- Ensure your child has all the equipment they will need for a maths lessons – e.g. a calculator, their mathematics workbook, a ruler, pens, pencils, eraser and other items.
- Discuss time-management skills such as planning and setting priorities. Encourage your child to develop a timetable to ensure a balance of study and work commitments, home life and social activities.
- Stay involved! Even if you don't know a lot about what your child is learning in high school mathematics, try to continue helping them with homework. Just being there, expressing an interest and saying you want to help can make your child feel supported – even if you can't help with the subject matter itself.
- Ask your child if you can look through their class workbook together. Ask them to explain the examples their teacher has already shown. If your child has difficulty describing what they covered in class that day, encourage them to talk to their teacher. In mathematics, concepts and principles build on each other. They are like bricks in a wall. If a brick is not solid in your child's mind, it will be difficult to build on.
- Ask your child to explain how they work things out and check if their comprehension of the question is accurate – e.g. "*What is the question asking you to do?*" and "*How did you get that answer?*"

- Encourage them to practise, practise, practise! Maths is a learned skill that improves with practise. Encourage your child to get their hands on as much practise material as possible – and do it as part of a regular routine.
- Encourage your child to study for maths tests – they can ask their teacher for practice questions, or previous tests. Doing practice tests can identify where your child's weaknesses are, and if they work on them, they can do better in the real test.
- If your child is having problems with maths, send a note/email or talk to your child's teacher or the school principal. Let the school know you are committed to helping your child improve their maths skills – they are there to help.

Adapted from:

- <http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/homework-and-study/mathematics/mathematics-tips/helping-your-child-with-high-school-maths>
- <http://education.qld.gov.au/literacyandnumeracy/pdf/factsheet-10-12-l-n.pdf>